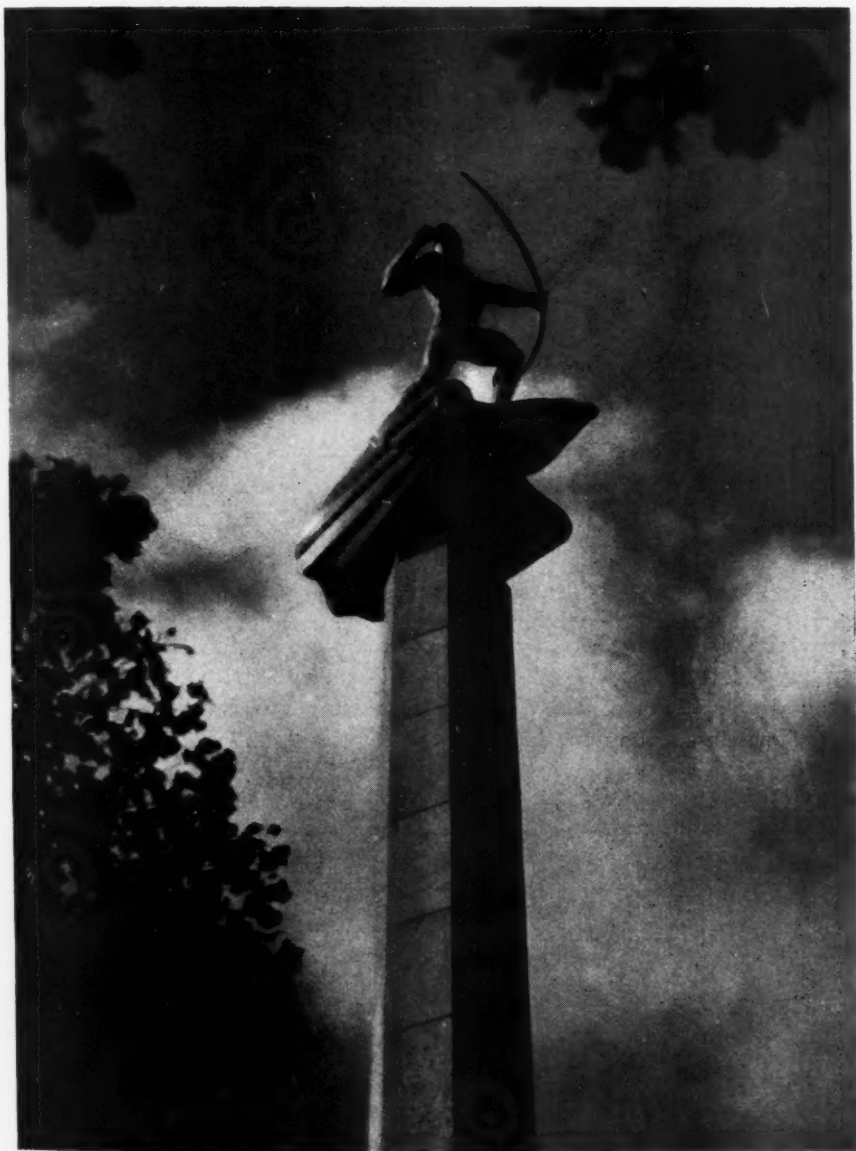


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# • THE • AMERICAN • SCANDINAVIAN REVIEW



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THE ARCHER, BY CARL MILLES

# America of the Fifties

LETTERS OF *FREDRIKA BREMER*

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EDITED FOR AMERICAN READERS BY ADOLPH B. BENSON

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## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS NUMBER OF THE REVIEW

Readers of the REVIEW will remember the article on the home of CARL MILLES in the Yule Number of 1921. His Archer, photographed by SIGURD FISCHER in this number, is one of the most interesting monuments in the Swedish capital.

Drawings by THEODOR KITTELSEN and Erik Werenskiold illustrate the book of *Norwegian Fairy Tales* published this fall by the Foundation.

BEN BLESSUM claims descent from the hero of a Fairy Tale who once rode in a sleigh with a troll and put a permanent crook in his neck by turning to look after his driver. Mr. Blessum is now representative of the Norwegian State Railways for the United States and Canada. Like his ancestor, Mr. Blessum speaks with authority on both rapid transportation and fairy tales.

WALDEMAR WESTERGAARD is Professor of History in Pomona College, California. He has twice visited the home of his ancestors in Jutland, once as a Fellow of the Foundation when he was engaged in a study of Baltic history. Three of his own snapshots illustrate his account of visits to the home of the poet of Jutland, Jeppe Aakjær.

During a year of study in Denmark, ROBERT S. HILLYER and S. Foster Damon trans-

lated for the Foundation *A Book of Danish Verse*. Mr. Hillyer, who is now an Assistant in English in Harvard University, is a poet in his own right.

On Christmas Day, 1849, Fredrika Bremer wrote, "I had almost forgotten—and that I must not do—to tell you of a visit I had this evening from the Quaker poet, Whittier, one of the purest and most gifted of the poetical minds of the Northern States, glowing for freedom, truth, and justice, championing then in his songs, and combating their enemies in the social life of the New World." WHITTIER's poem to Miss Bremer gives us the reverse of the medal.

HENRY ADAMS BELLOW'S translation of *The Poetic Edda* has been acclaimed as "one of the finest translations ever made into English form from the Norse." Mr. Bellows is by birth a New Englander. He now lives in Minneapolis, where he has been editor of *The Bellman* and is now editor of *The Northwestern Miller*.

ADOLPH B. BENSON turns occasionally from his classes in Yale University to discover for readers of the REVIEW some new chapter in the historical relations between America and the North. He has selected and edited the letters of Fredrika Bremer in our new volume *America of the Fifties*.

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## BEYOND THE QUOTA

The Immigration Act of 1924 is not designed to restrict the entrance of visiting students to the United States, but it became evident during the summer months that the student interchange of the Foundation would be obstructed seriously and each incoming student would be delayed in the commencement of his work if some special provision were not made for his admission outside the quota. The law provides that a bona fide student may be admitted as a "non-quota immigrant" if he is to study "at an accredited school, college, academy, or university particularly designated by him and approved by the Secretary of Labor." But many of the Fellows of the Foundation coming from Scandinavian universities can not determine at which American institutions they

are to study until after they have consulted officers of the Foundation in New York. Other Fellows come for social, industrial, and scientific research such as will not permit them to enroll at any one university. These students could not present the credentials required by law and would have been compelled to endure delay for admission in the quota. This was happily avoided when Secretary Davis listed the Foundation as an institution of education approved by the Department of Labor. Now Scandinavian students appointed to be Fellows and Honorary Fellows of the Foundation are admitted as "non-quota immigrants" when they present to American consuls abroad the certificates issued by the Foundation to all Fellows.



By Theodor Kittelsen

THE NECK SCREAMING



# THE AMERICAN-SCANDINAVIAN REVIEW

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## The Norse Fairy Tale

By BEN BLESSUM

THE Norse *eventyr*, like the folk tale of other European peoples, is of two kinds. First, there is that which has grown spontaneously out of the soil, the legitimate child of the dreams, desires, and deeds of the Norse people, the natural envisagement and symbolization of the powers of nature as encountered by the Norsemen, colored and shaped by their conception of the natural and "supernatural" phenomena that surround them. Second, there is that which has been heard in foreign lands and has been brought home by soldiers, skippers, merchants, minstrels, monks, and others gifted with a receptive mind and a ready tongue.

In Norway, as in other lands, the scribes evidently had an anything but respectful opinion of these tales of the common people; for no matter what incredible doings of knights and fair ladies they thought worthy of laboriously passing on to posterity, no one ever found it in keeping with his dignity as an educator and poet to recount the simple but no less fanciful stories that constituted at once the code of manners and morals, the university, and the minstrelsy of the common herd. Perhaps, however, it was just as well for us that no Malmesbury discovered their value, but that they were allowed to grow and flower freely in the minds and hearts of the simple yeomen until such time as those great and gentle souls, Asbjørnsen and Moe, found them and could with loving hand and sympathetic insight give them in permanent form to their people and to the world.

Naturally, the tales of foreign origin have long since assumed a shape which makes them as truly Norse in Norway as similar tales are British in Britain. The Norsemen being a far-faring race, it was



PETER CHRISTEN ASBJØRNSEN

natural that they should bring home to their own firesides the marvelous stories they had heard in Constantinople, Naples, Novgorod, Granada, Paris, London, or Dublin. Then, as these stories were told and retold in the long winter evenings, the ideas and superstitions of the narrators together with the mysteries of the nature familiar to them—the splendor of the midnight sun, the fury of the tempest, the sighing of the sombre firs and the trembling of the aspens, the opalescent light on the summer sea, the snowy winding-sheet of the mountain wastes, the gloomy canyons, the bright flowered meadows,

the terror of the avalanche, the music of the brooks, and the roar of the cataracts—all these things helped to reshape the original story and make it a thing of Norse flesh and blood and spirit. For has not the flower of Araby been transplanted into the hard soil of the Northland, and must it not, if it shall live, accustom itself to the breath of the glaciers as well as to the kiss of the summer sun? Must it not be content to hug the fireside of the peasant in his dark, low-roofed cabin as it once basked in the sunshine that laughed in the fountains of the Sultan Haroun-al-Raschid in the city of a thousand delights?

Other tales of foreign origin are nevertheless of a stuff much nearer home than the exotic imaginings of the Orient. Many of the *eventyr*, like the ballads, give evidence of being based on the classic romances of mediaeval France, Britain, and Germany. I am inclined to think, too, that the frequency with which "the king's son of England" appears as the prospective bridegroom of the Norse peasant maid harks back to the time when traffic was very lively across the North Sea, and the court of England was looked upon as the apex of earthly glory. When one considers that the Norsemen were not at all behind the people of southern and western Europe in their love of poetry and romance, and that at least up to the year 1300 their capacity

for creative effort on these lines was fully as great as that of any people of their day, it seems certain that the romances and lays must have been recounted in the halls of Norse nobles whence they in turn, through the ears and tongues of servants, reached the common people—though perhaps in a mutilated form — and were then reshaped by the tastes and conceptions of their new audience.

Reminiscences of the ancient pagan times of the Norsemen themselves frequently occur. I do not think there can be much doubt that the *lindorm*, which so frequently appears as the guardian of treasure in the *eventyr*, is

our old friend Fafnir, the guardian of the treasure Sigurd Fafnirsbane won. And may not the "Great Böjg," that cold, slimy, impassable beast within whose gruesome folds Peer Gynt (both the Peer of the *eventyr* and the Peer of Ibsen) found himself locked, be a more modern conception of that great World Serpent who, tail between teeth, held the whole world together within his mighty coils?

The tales which I would call, at least in essentials, indigenously Norse, differ very distinctly from those of any other people, not only in the events they recount but also in their outlook upon life. Not least characteristic is their broad humor, their wholesome poking fun at shams and stupid conventionalities, their merciless pillorying of thick-headed and conceited authority. Here we find old prototypes. Some of the ancient skalds were noted for their vitriolic wit, and the *nidvise* (poem of ridicule) was a dreaded weapon in the hands of a Gunlaug Ormstunga or an Egil Skallagrímsson. The direct descendant of the *nidvise* has been the *stev* which has persisted almost down to our day, and is, I am told, still practised in some remote districts of Norway. This public taunting of an enemy was very common in former times. There was also the *mandjævning* of which we have the classic example in the debate between Sigurd the Crusader and his brother regarding



JØRGEN MOE

their respective merits and achievements. In reading the *eventyr* it has often struck me that a good many of them are simply a cruder form of *stev* or *mandjevning*. They are, of course, not aimed at any particular person, but rather at an entire class and always at the official class, sometimes, in fact not seldom, at the Crown itself. When one remembers how oppressed the common people were from later mediaeval times to far into the nineteenth century, it will not be found at all surprising that the official-ridden, defenseless peasant hit upon the idea of utilizing the popular tale for the purpose of ridiculing his arch-enemies, the grasping, well-nourished, overbearing priest, sheriff, judge, and king. I may be mistaken, of course, but there would seem no reason for composing such tales of ridiculously stupid and incredibly mean officials as the stories *The Preacher and the Sexton*, *The Charcoal Burner*, *Peik*, and many others if there were no axe to grind.

The native Norse folk tales may be roughly divided into two kinds, those of the sea and those of the land. The former, naturally, have arisen along the coast, and the most typical examples have taken shape in that long stretch of country north of Trondhjem, which is called Nordland, and which is the province of the largest fisheries. Naturally, too, they deal with the perils and mysteries of the deep, and sometimes with the magic of the Lapps, who in former times were credited with uncanny power over wind, wave, man, and beast.

The inland type of folk tale found its inspiration in the natural surroundings of the peasant, in the elements upon which his welfare depended, and the superstitions engendered by the natural phenomena he could not understand. In the tales both of land and sea a certain admixture of pagan as well as Christian superstitions and beliefs may be traced. They have in common the fear of supernatural beings and the belief in magic. There is, however, an outstanding difference between them, in the resigned fatalism of the fisherman as opposed to the buoyant optimism of the landsman. The peasant always saves his hero by some unexpected trick, or as a last resort—though he seldom has recourse to it—by the miraculous interference of God through the ringing of church bells, the throwing of steel over the lost one, or even the sign of the cross. When the troll, for instance, has all but gotten Peer Gynt in his power, the mountain gives him up at once on the ringing of the bells. Not so with the victims of the *draug*, the dreaded troll of the sea; when he is seen sailing his half-boat, the beholder is irrevocably doomed to be drowned. This tragic fatalism of the men who go down to the sea in ships is, of course, a natural product of the life they lead; for the sea is merciless and will prevail.

The dramatis personæ of the true Norse folk tale are many and varied, including practically all visible beings and things, as well as the forest troll, the mountain troll, the hill people, the *hulder*, the sea troll or *draug*, the troll of rivers and tarns known as the *nökk*, and



many other mysterious creatures. Even the elements, particularly the winds, figure frequently. The human characters range from the king down through princes and princesses, with now and then a chamberlain (always a rascal), to the judge, the sheriff, the hangman, and the priest (all of them either rascals or fools or both), and lastly the peasant, his wife, and their children. The animal world is represented by everything from the unicorn to the ant. Our Lord and St. Peter frequently appear, while the Virgin Mary (a relic of Catholic Norway) appears but once or twice. Finally, but very prominently, his Satanic Majesty plays a part.

The chief figure among all these, however, and the one who has no counterpart in the folk lore of other peoples, not even in that of the Swedes and Danes, is that mixture of laziness and industry, slovenliness and final magnificence, guile and generosity, luck and mishaps—Askeladd. The name is as untranslatable as the figure is impossible of exposition; it really means a slovenly, lazy, good-for-nothing, tousle-headed loafer, who will do nothing useful, but spends his time rooting about the embers and ashes of the fire-place. Everybody considers him a fool. Particularly contemptuous in their treatment of him are his two elder brothers, Peter and Paul. His own Christian name is always Esben. When the proper time comes, Esben Askeladd fares forth into the world and performs deeds never before heard of. He proves to be not stupid, but the craftiest of the crafty; not a laggard and dolt, but the swiftest of avengers; not a shrinking coward, but the incarnation of heroism. Of course he is helped by witchcraft, but that is not the whole secret of his power. He always proves himself kind, noble, and brave. He releases the old woman who for a hundred years has had her nose caught in a crack in a log, and at whom his elder brothers only jeer. He divides his last slice of bread with another famished being. He gives his old nag to the wolf who has starved for a hundred years. He throws the gasping, stranded salmon back into the water. In short, he does a score of kindnesses while on his way to the king's palace—and all without hope of reward. But as it turns out, all these beneficiaries have it in their power to be of vital assistance to him when the difficulties in the way of rescuing the enchanted princess seem absolutely insurmountable; and so, instead of returning home, as his arrogant brothers did, with three raw and well salted strips down their backs where the skin had been peeled off by the royal executioner, he arrives finally as the king's son-in-law and ruler of half the kingdom.

In the same way, after other deeds of kindness, he rides nine hundred miles to the end of the world, walks scatheless past the great dragon, the *lindorm* (Fafnir?) and goes through fire and water and solid mountain into the chamber of the weeping princess, who entreats him to leave her to her fate, or he will surely be devoured by the troll

when it comes home. But Askeladd stubbornly refuses to budge. To increase his strength, he receives the magic sword and the magic draught (the belt of Tor?) and he slices off all the three ghastly heads of the troll with one stroke. Then he kills two other trolls, one with six and one with nine heads. He rescues two other princesses held captive by them, escorts all three to their home, marries the youngest, and proceeds to reign.

Now all this sounds very much like any other Jack-the-Giant-Killer story, I admit. Yet the stories about Askeladd are so enriched with human details, so embroidered with human foibles and virtues, that he lives and breathes among us. He never steps out of his own skin; he always, even on the day of his transfiguration, remains the same big-hearted, simple, lovable country boy. His individuality is maintained with consummate art, and he is, when all is said and done, Esben Askeladd *Norseman* from the top of his tousled head to the soles of his adventurous feet. And it is precisely this faithful and sober keeping the hero always on the ground, in the world as we know it, even in the midst of his most extravagant adventures, that makes the character of Askeladd as human as you and I, and therefore lovable and understandable, even though he is as romantically impossible as Aladdin.

There is still another phase to the complex character of Askeladd, that which illustrates how difficulties may be overcome by a cool head, a stout heart, and a nimble wit. For the *eventyr* are as much a guide to right living as the entertainment of an idle hour. In fact they constitute a complete philosophy of life, as we may see from the fact that quips and proverbs from them frequently occur in ordinary conversation among Norsemen, and these sayings are distinguished by saga-like terseness, profound wisdom, quaint wit, and sometimes pointed sarcasm, as well as exceeding good sense.

Other stories are designed purely for entertainment, but even these usually contain a pointed moral. Among them *Mumble Goose-egg* is particularly striking. In this story of the ungainly hero who was hatched out of a goose-egg by seven women—none of whom was sorry to let him shift for himself when he showed his Gargantuan appetite—the narrator has used every trick that could tickle the risibilities of his audience. His hero has miraculous strength. It required the efforts of a hundred men to turn his war-club on the anvil while he forged it, and his knapsack was made of a hundred oxhides. His impetuosity almost wrecked the king's castle, for when he was set to chop wood he demolished everything chopable before breakfast, and when he was to carry in an armful of fire-wood he almost tore down the castle in trying to get through the kitchen door. When he was sent out to fell timber, he levelled the whole forest in short order, and when the king's hundred horses proved incapable of moving the load of logs, he pulled

their heads off in endeavoring to start them. To get rid of him, the king sends him single-handed against the enemy. He does not bother about the "squirt-guns" they turn on him, but when a cannon ball gets into his windpipe, and a chain shot takes the sandwich away from between his fingers as he is lunching on the battle-field, he rightfully waxes angry at not being allowed to eat his lunch in peace. He whacks the ground with his club, thereby causing the army to bound up like rubber balls into the high heavens. He is then sent to hell to collect taxes, scares the devil's mother into hysterics, plays cards with Old Nick himself—cleaning him out, of course—and finally induces him to put his hands into the crack in a great tree, which Mumble is splitting, "to help rend it, you know," knocks out the wedge, and leaves his Infernal Majesty so caught!

How uniquely, how typically Norse is not this erratic human dynamo, this good-naturedly ruthless, devastatingly energetic, pugnacious, persistent, impatient product of the land of stupendous things! When his five-hundred-pound axe swings in the primeval forest, when he slashes and maims the hoary giants so they fall groaning and roaring, is it not really the autumn hurricane one hears—the despoiler and destroyer? When he rages and darkens the sun with his throwing of stones, is it not really the letting loose of the avalanche, that ever-present terror which literally hangs suspended over the heads of so many Norsemen? Again, when he is in playful mood and means no harm, but wrecks everything within reach because his strength is so entirely out of proportion to that of everything about him, is it not really the laughing brook which suddenly becomes a terrifying, all-annihilating flood? And when he fights the enemies of the king, vanquishes trolls, swashbuckles into hell itself, and handles the devil so roughly that he is glad to get off alive, may it not be our old friend Tor—the ungainly, Jotun-slaying, loud-laughing, terrible Tor? Verily, it is he. A reduced, ridiculous, ugly caricature perhaps, a sad thing by comparison, but nevertheless Tor. Poor fellow—he has fallen on evil days!

The animal story is also very common and has in Norway attained a perfection as finished in its way as the fables of Aesop or La Fontaine. Like these it generally points a moral, but unlike them it is often very funny. The characterization of the animals is true to type. The bear talks and acts as a bear would talk and act; he is not a mouthpiece for a moralist, but bruin himself. And so it is with the entire range of animals. The same applies to the shaggy troll, the sad *nökk*, the lovesick *hulder*, the mischievous *nisse*. They could not possibly be otherwise than they are—as much the product of the soil as are the animals. Like the tales which lampoon officials, the animal stories, too, are notable for their trenchant wit.

Finally, all the eventyr faithfully reflect the mind of the Nor-

wegian peasant as well as the substance of what the generations have taught him regarding the nature of mankind. In them he has made for himself a well defined moral code and a very satisfactory philosophy of life. His faith in the efficacy of good works as a means to happiness is manifested throughout, as is the misery that redounds upon the evil-doer. But having looked life in the face, he is also aware that evil is not infrequently returned for good, and so his goblet of sweet wisdom contains at the bottom a bitter sediment of wormwood. This quiet acceptance of the fact that all is not as it should be in the world is particularly apparent in some of the animal stories, for instance *Well Done, Ill Rewarded*, or *Such Is the World's Reward*, or *The Bear and the Fox*, all of which end with a resigned recognition of the triumph of trickery and ingratitude. In one instance, *The Story of the Boy with the Beer Keg*, he even goes so far as pointedly to reproach both the devil and Our Lord for their unfairness toward men. Our Lord wishes to drink with the boy by the wayside. "Who are you?" says the boy. "I am Our Lord, and I come from heaven." But the boy replies, "I won't drink with you, for you make such a big difference between people here in the world, and divide so unfairly that some become very rich and some very poor. No, I won't drink with you." And to the devil he says, "No, you only torture and plague people, and whenever any misfortune comes, they always say it's your fault. I won't drink with you." But then comes Death, and to him the boy says, "You I will drink with. You are a fine man, for you treat all alike, both rich and poor."

On the other hand, nothing can be finer or more inspiring than the abiding faith in the blessings of charity, gratitude, and service as exemplified in the movingly beautiful tale, *The Companion*. At the entrance to the church lay, encased in a great block of ice, the mutilated corpse of an executed malefactor, and the parishioners spat upon it as they entered the house of God. But the poor peasant boy, Askeladd, pitied the abused one, and had him buried in consecrated ground, with prayers and hymns, and the ringing of bells, and this though it cost him the few shillings he possessed. It is too long a story even to outline here: suffice it to say that the malefactor came and followed him, unknown, as his companion, guide, and defender on his adventurous journey through the world. The sinner is redeemed through his humility, gratitude, and good works, and the boy is likewise made happy. But finally they have to part "for now they were calling for him [the criminal] with all the bells of heaven."

All fables are perhaps originally nature myths. Be that as it may, the Norse *eventyr* (I do not like the name fairy tale, for the *eventyr* has little to do with fairies) could not possibly have developed its peculiar characteristics in any other country—no, not even in neighboring Sweden. The *eventyr* is nature, and nature is the *eventyr*. It



is only necessary to walk on a late summer evening beside the lonely tarn hidden under somber firs, to see the *nökk* silently sink among the water lilies, the silver rings spreading ever farther from the dark nook in which his shadowy head vanished on your sudden appearance. Or you row out under black and lowering clouds—perhaps a few great drops have already fallen—and you suddenly hear coming from the little island behind you a shriek as of a soul in mortal anguish of fear; and when you hurriedly turn, you see the great dark body of the *draug* gliding silently into the cheerless depths. Of course the scientific pooh-bahs of to-day will tell you that what you saw was not the *nökk* at all, but a beaver, and the shriek you heard was that of the great loon, and the supposed *draug* was nothing but an ordinary seal, perhaps magnified in the atmospheric conditions of a Norse summer night and by your own imagination. Very well. But the world was not always blessed with scientific iconoclasts; and so, when on a dark October night the simple wood-chopper suddenly saw looming before him in the gloomy forest a great figure all shaggy and uncouth, with fiery eyes and small trees growing out of its head and shoulders, and heard it suddenly snort like a dozen bulls, saw it make a great jump, and then go tearing through the forest, the young trees crashing about its unshapely limbs and body, he knew positively that it was the famous old troll itself—and not an old bull moose, as the modern scoffer superciliously informs him.

Or when, on a summer evening, he suddenly emerges from a deep and dark ravine or a sinister forest, and sees, flashing high up above him and far away, the light of a thousand candles among the bastions and towers and spires of an incredibly great building, what can it be but the palace of the Ronde King? Ole has never heard of refractions and spectral colors and tricks of reflected sunlight on clean-washed slate; but he has heard of the Ronde King and his invisible palace shingled with solid gold, ever since the time when he himself was in his cradle with the old steel-yard lying beside him to prevent the underground people from stealing him and leaving a changeling in his place. And has he not heard also these many years that

*"far north in the mountains,  
deep under the boulders,  
there, there is music*

made by the troll, and tears and lamentations of those who have been taken into the mountain.

Think of the young girl tending cattle, alone day after day and night after night, in the vast uplands, with their strange cloud shadows flitting and scurrying across the lonely moors, with the sudden rising

and vanishing of strange feathered and furred things, the sighing and murmuring of underground brooks, the roar of the hidden waterfalls—the obvious cooking-cauldrons of the giants. Think of such a child on 'moonlit nights with the uncanny lights and shadows thrown on the walls of her little shelter, with the stealthy nosing beneath her window of wild beasts—perhaps even the blood-curdling sight, one night, of a great shaggy head with small vicious eyes peering through her window. Would it not make even you and me, scientific and materialistic as we are, "see things?" Then imagine yourself, fifteen years old or less, lying in your little bed some storm-swept night—a thousand miles from the world—listening to the wind—and suddenly hearing a roar as of thunder and a crash of you know not what, and then ear-splitting shrieks—and then a sudden silence again—would not *you* cower under the sheep-skin and pray that the cross carved above the door-jamb would keep out the trolls and the *Asgaardsrei* (the Ride of Lost Souls) and all other evil? Put yourself in her place—nursed as she is on a thousand superstitions, ecclesiastical and secular—and ask yourself if you would be able to realize that what you heard was simply an encounter between wild stallions on the mountain.

Norway is a fair land, a land of sunshine, blue skies, bird-song, and flowers; but it is also a land of wild grandeur, of unutterably lonely wastes, of deep, interminable, somber forests, of weird glens, bottomless bogs, cheerless moors, mystic tarns, and treacherous seas, with sudden death lurking in squall and avalanche, with midnight sun and dark winters aflame with the terribly beautiful Northern Lights—a land of labor and sacrifice and bitter tragedy. All this has entered into the soul of the Norseman and has found expression in the somberness as well as the happy abandon of his folk-music, in his architecture, his poetry, his pictorial art, and his daily life. Is it to be wondered at that his folk tales, too, are merry and fanciful, but with an undertone of sadness, resignation, fatalism—and that he finds a bitter drop at the bottom of his cup?





JEPPE AAKJÆR IN HIS STUDY

## Jeppe Aakjær

By WALDEMAR WESTERGAARD

AS a student in Copenhagen before the Great War, I had seen Jeppe Aakjær at the Rigsarkiv, where he came frequently to study the history of his own community from the original records. To meet this champion of the oppressed, poet of Danish democracy, and sympathetic interpreter of Danish common life, was a privilege not lightly to be regarded by a young Danish-American who shared with the poet a common Jutish ancestry. As a child I had indeed often heard of Sten Blicher and his *Bindstourw*; songs of Grundtvig were often sung in our little Danish settlement out on the windswept Dakota prairies; but here was the biographer and successor of Blicher, and the poet who shares with Grundtvig the distinction of being most widely sung of all the Danish poets, past or present, so the appearance of Aakjær in the archives was to me an event of the first importance. I recall vividly the impression he made upon all of us who saw him daily and learned to know him. He had the self-confidence and reserve of a



JENLE, JEPPE AAKJÆR'S HOME

successful peasant farmer, but once the ice was broken, his great good nature and conversational charm soon made him the center of any social gathering.

After a ten-year interval, I visited my ancestral home once more. My old uncle Christian was still alive, a sturdy *Husmand* of the type that Aakjær labored to conserve. On

my way to Sønderhaa near Thisted where my uncle lived, I stopped to call on Aakjær at his home, Jenle, on the banks of the Limfjord, in the part of Jutland still called Himmerland, the reputed home of those Cimbri and Teutones who once threatened the very life of the Roman Republic. The hired man met me at the station with a light two-horse wagon well provided with fur robes to keep out the wintry North Sea wind. When I made my second visit at Jenle, a Ford Sedan did the business. Detroit had invaded the home of the Cimbri and laid low the "lord of Himmerland" himself!

Aakjær is a farmer, who likes to see things grow, and is pained when he finds a bit of soil that has failed to yield the maximum crop. On Jenle's fifty-odd acres he raises livestock and poultry of a high grade. Whether it is the farm that makes possible his literary work, or his writing that keeps up his farm, I shall not attempt to say. Both enterprises give every evidence of being going concerns.

The Aakjær farmstead is a delightful place, as pleasing to the eye as it is comforting to the soul. From the author's study, where we talked indeed "of many things," but more of "cabbages" than of "kings," we could see the Limfjord just beyond a luxurious field of rye. To our right lay the acres of native heather presented to Aakjær a few years ago by friends and admirers from all parts of Denmark. Inside, the house reflects the artistic taste and practical sense of Fru Aakjær (Nanna Krog). Its interior beauty has been not only



THE WINDMILL AT JENLE



planned but carried out by her. She has carved the doorposts, designed and decorated the great chests, and painted the walls. In the dining room, scene of many a brilliant festival, is a tall "Bornholmer" clock, native of Bornholm—"Burgunder-holm"—Denmark's island outpost on the eastern Baltic side. Up on the plate rack is a huge peacock platter of Copenhagen faience. The artist-wife has made a fit home for the artist-poet.

Aakjær is a lyric poet, a writer of short stories, a novelist, and a dramatist. But he is not only a literary artist. He is a champion of the freedom of the spirit, of the dignity of honest labor, of the worth of the common man. As a means to rouse his compatriots, he has used the study of history, and he is a local historian of proved ability. Because his look is forward, he wants the Danes to see their past truly, that they may free themselves from its enslaving traditions. Erroneous popular beliefs, whether in witchcraft—of which some vestiges remained in his youth—or other superstitions, or in antiquated political institutions, he has first examined with scholarly patience and care, and then exposed or scourged or ridiculed with whatever weapon lay nearest to his hand. The ghosts of the past must be laid!

The pietistic movement within the State Church in Denmark, which is known as the "Inner Mission" was the first "ghost" that Aakjær attempted to lay. He is himself a social reformer and practical politician. The religious recluse who turns his gaze inward and concerns himself primarily with sin, his own or his neighbor's, is to Aakjær an anti-social being, an enemy of progress. His attack on the leaders of the "Inner Mission" took place a little more than twenty-five years ago. Since then, he has poured forth a stream of poems, short stories, plays, novels, historical articles, contributions to newspapers, biographical studies, in unwearied succession; he has lectured to audiences in all sections of Denmark; he has indeed made Jenle a center of light and source of leadership for Jutland and the Danish nation.

Aakjær's greatest heroes are, I suppose, Robert Burns and Sten Blicher. He showed me his shelf of books dealing with the Scottish bard, and told of his joy in visiting the scenes of Burns's struggle and triumphs. If he succeeds in carrying out his plan of writing a biog-



A CORNER OF THE DINING-ROOM

raphy of Burns, we may look for an interpretation that is original and thought-provoking. But first the Blicher biography, of which the first volume has appeared, must be finished. His growing collection of materials throwing light on the life of his Jutish predecessor and prototype should make the Aakjær life of Blicher the authoritative biography for many years to come.

As a literary artist, Aakjær has high standards of workmanship. He will labor—or wait—for hours to find the word or expression that has not been worn smooth by much previous handling. Whether he recounts in solemn cadence his tender memories of *Karup Aa*, the stream on whose banks his childhood days were spent, or thumps time with *Pae Sivensaek* “who dan-ces there”—until a peg-legged on-looker trips his whirling figure—or sings the praises of his native village of Aakjær where first he tried his poet’s flute; whether he sings the song of the harvester, or pleads the cause of labor, he is always willing to take infinite pains that the form shall be worthy of the message.

It is not by accident or good fortune that Aakjær’s words have winged their way to the hearts of the humblest of the Danish people. His philosophy of life, like the poetry in which it finds its best expression, is “born of a sunbeam.” Under its rays, the pietistic gloom that has darkened much of the Danish countryside must gradually dissolve, and the Danish peasant enter into that joy of life which is his rightful heritage.

Readers of the REVIEW are familiar with the *landsmaal* movement in Norway. Let it at once be said that Aakjær with all his enthusiasm for the *Jysk* dialect as a vehicle of expression suited to bringing out the character and environment of the mainland Dane, is not a *maal-stræver*, as was Arne Garborg in Norway. He does not expect the ancient dialect of Jylland to replace the Danish of the cities, but he feels keenly that it is as deserving of dignified attention from Danish scholars as are the languages of Syria, Persia, and Mesopotamia. As a lad of eighteen he collected folk tales for the famous Danish folklorist, Evald Tang Christensen. To-day he presides over the destinies of the local historical society of his province, and is the leading contributor to its publication. He believes that the *Jysk* tongue lives, and will continue to live for centuries, and he strives in every way possible to teach its virtues to the Danes of Copenhagen and the islands. Like Ruskin and Morris in England, Aakjær has no patience with the tendency of our industrial society to obliterate individuality, and he is particularly opposed to having the Jutland Danes reduced to the dead linguistic level of the rest of the country.

The name Jenle is Jutish for “Hermitage,” but Aakjær’s home is far from being a retreat. The farmer-poet and his wife have made it a center of light and learning for the Danish people, a meeting place for peasant and *litterateur*, a rallying ground for the preservation of

Jutish individuality. Every year at midsummer they invite the public to come over for a two or three days' *Fest*. People come by thousands, camping by the fjordside, listening to speeches by Aakjær and others on social and political problems, meeting folks from far and near, singing stirring Danish songs, and discussing with one another the questions of the hour. Many a young peasant has had his first mental awakening at these Jutland "chautauquas," where the dream of Aakjær's predecessor, Sten Blicher, has been in large part realized.

When I left Jenle in the midsummer of 1923, the fields were heavy with growing grain, gray clouds drifted across the Jutland skies, and the fierce but invigorating blasts that came from the North Sea bent the trees to eastward. My host was busy getting ready for the annual festival which—much to my regret—I was obliged to forego.

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## A Song of the Rye

By JEPPE AAKJÆR

Translated by ROBERT S. HILLYER

*I crouch among the friendly roots of rye, in shelter here.*

*I listen, and I listen till my blood is singing clear.*

*The white rye, the kind rye, that strikes me, as the breeze*

*Plays with a thousand little fingers on the silver keys.*

*It sounds like music in a vaulted hall where dancers pass,*

*And the crystals of the lamps are tinkling with their bells of glass.*

*The calling song, the bell song, along the summer rye,*

*The dear familiar Danish sound in which we live and die.*

*It hymns across the cottage roofs and pastoral expanse,*

*And round the living hedge the flying flute notes glance,*

*Behind the brook and bramble bush and marsh its flowing chord*

*Goes out to meet the song of waves across the windy fjord.*

# To Fredrika Bremer

By JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

*Seeress of the misty Norland,  
Daughter of the Vikings bold,  
Welcome to the sunny Vineland,  
Which thy fathers sought of old!*

*Soft as flow of Silja's waters,  
When the moon of Summer shines,  
Strong as Winter from his mountains  
Roaring through the sleeted pines,*



FREDRIKA BREMER

*Heart and ear, we long have listened*

*To thy saga, rune, and song;  
As a household joy and presence  
We have known and loved thee long.*

*By the mansion's marble mantel,  
Round the log-walled cabin's hearth,  
Thy sweet thoughts and northern fancies  
Meet and mingle with our mirth.*

*And o'er weary spirits keeping  
Sorrow's night-watch, long and still,  
Shine they like thy sun of Summer,  
Over midnight vale and hill.*

*We alone to thee are strangers,  
Thou our friend and teacher art;  
Come, and know us as we know thee;*

*Let us meet thee heart to heart!*

*To our homes and household altars,  
We, in turn, thy steps would lead,  
As thy loving hand has led us  
O'er the threshold of the Swede.*



# Fredrika Bremer and America

By HENRY ADAMS BELLOWS

IT IS the curse of history that it has to be written by historians. Here and there, to be sure, some giant, some poet, some dramatist has taken the thing in hand, and written history so as to make it live, but in the main the laudable desire of historians to achieve accuracy and to leave out no essential facts has squeezed their works dry of sap. Moreover, history has to be written in the past tense, as of things already half forgotten; its people and its emotions have to be reconstructed out of musty shreds of documents. Even Carlyle, Titan that he was, had to take Cromwell and Frederick the Great, dog-leech Marat and sea-green Robespierre, at second hand; he made them live with his own gigantic vitality, but he could not show them as they really were.

For many periods of history contemporary documents are amply available, but these, as a rule, lack the essential quality of all valid historical writing, which is the perspective of detachment. The reporter is no adequate historian of his time, the controversialist, the politician still less so. Furthermore, without detachment selection is impossible, and the enormous mass of available material becomes utterly bewildering. And so, to most people, the history of the past is real only in scattered bits, where a Scott or a Dumas has touched it, or where a Dante or a Shakespeare rises like a mountain peak above the gray mists which plodding, necessary historical research has spread damply over centuries of human passion.

The history of the United States has suffered peculiarly from the benumbing influence of the textbook, which is why most people know so little about it. A few episodes, typified by great dramatic figures, have kept their vitality; Washington and the Revolution, Lincoln and the Civil War, stirring bits from the days when there was still a western frontier, still live. But as a whole the average American's picture of his nation's history is singularly colorless. The historian, giving him the facts, has obscured the life out of which they grew; the contemporary material with which the historian works is, for the layman, both terrifying in extent and misleading from its partisanship.

To bridge the gap between history and life, events need a sympathetic yet dispassionate observer, shrewd of insight, possessed of the power of accurate expression, free to mingle with all classes and conditions of people, yet never of them, a human being, as it were, from another planet. Such a combination of gifts and opportunities is of necessity very rare. It is found only when a trained, skillful writer visits a country other than his own, and for no purpose save to observe

open-mindedly; even then his vision is often distorted by circumstance, so that what he sees bears little relation to the whole. But with fair chances, such a visitor is in a position to write real history; the facts, the men and women, the ideals come to him at first hand through his five senses, and not through the dusty medium of old paper, and yet he is able to exercise something of the power of detachment and selection which is the historian's bulwark against the overwhelming floods of actuality.

Such a historian, rarely gifted and with rare opportunities, came to the United States in 1849. It is a period worth thinking about. Webster, Clay, Emerson, Lowell, Longfellow, Douglas, Washington Irving, Wendell Phillips, Sumner, Garrison, anti-slavery, the development of the West, California, railroad building, transcendentalism, Jenny Lind, P. T. Barnum, and underneath it all the first mutterings of the as yet unseen Civil War. It is a period regarding which most Americans know the bare facts and little more, a period which exists for them but does not live, certainly not as a rounded whole. The reader of Emerson has no picture of the new city of St. Paul on the upper waters of the Mississippi; the student of the Southern slave trade has never heard the spirit-rappings of Rochester.

Fredrika Bremer saw it all. Her journeyings—she stayed in the United States two years—took her from the Franconia Notch of New Hampshire to the everglades of Florida, from St. Paul to New Orleans. She visited Emerson at Concord, talked with Webster and Clay at Washington, traveled with James Russell Lowell and his wife, was present at Calhoun's funeral in Charleston, stayed at Governor Ramsay's house in St. Paul. Senator Hale personally presented her to President Taylor at the White House; George Washington's nephew and his wife, thanks to a letter of introduction given to her by Henry Clay, entertained her at Mount Vernon.

This extraordinary wealth of opportunity would of itself have meant little if Fredrika Bremer had not been so peculiarly well fitted to take advantage of it. To begin with, she was a Swede; in other words, she was sympathetic with the American people and yet not of them. She could observe their hopes and their passions without falling a prey to them; she could understand and yet remain aloof. Second, she was a trained, experienced novelist, but a novelist without violent prejudice; her stories were masterpieces of unimpassioned observation. Finally, and perhaps most important of all, she had a keen sense of humor which never resorted to unkindly caricature. Hawthorne characterized her perfectly when he said she was "worthy of being the maiden aunt of the whole human race."

Had Miss Bremer come to America for the express purpose of writing a book, or even in order to seek literary material for her novels, the chances are that her vision of what she saw would have been more

or less distorted; she would have sought, not experience, but copy. But there was no such warping influence at work. Her letters to Sweden, for all they were written with the punctilious care of a professional author, were not intended for publication. Now, letters of this sort generally suffer from the emotional intimacy that makes them dear to their recipients, but there was no such quality in Fredrika Bremer. A maiden aunt is almost the only type of correspondent whose letters are fit to be revealed to the world.

It is hard for Americans of this generation to realize how much of a personage Fredrika Bremer was seventy-five years ago. As a matter of fact, her novels were more widely known, through Mary Howitt's admirable translations, in England and America than in Sweden itself. That *The Neighbors* and *The President's Daughters* seem dull to-day is the fault of the times, not of the author. The middle years of the nineteenth century were prolific in novelists, many of them women, whose works achieved a brief but thoroughly international popularity, and won not only the eager praise of ordinary readers but the warm approval of serious critics. Among these writers Miss Bremer was one of the foremost, and so, when she came to America, the distinguished men and women who welcomed her felt that they were receiving quite as much honor and pleasure as they conferred.

And she talked back to them, politely but fearlessly. She argued with Emerson, which was always a somewhat daring achievement, and he respected her views so much that he deliberately sought her out for further debate. In the South she avoided the subject of slavery when she could, but when discussion was forced on her she said exactly what she thought. She was not critical, but she was independent; she admired much, and warmly, but her vision was too keen to be blind to faults.

One serious objection may be alleged to her published collection of letters on America in its original form: it is too long. Thirteen hundred printed octavo pages bulk formidably, and inevitably include much that, with the lapse of time, can well be dispensed with. For this reason, the publication of a new edition\* of her *Hemmen i Nya Verlden*, as translated by Mary Howitt, and admirably edited and condensed into some 350 pages by Adolph B. Benson, represents a notable service both to the memory of the Swedish novelist and to the cause of American history. In this short book, America of 1850 comes startlingly to life, North and South, East and West, from the frigid respectability of the summer colony at Nahant, "with Mr. Prescott, the excellent historian; Mrs. Bryant; the preacher Bellows, from New

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\**America of the Fifties: Letters of Fredrika Bremer.* SCANDINAVIAN CLASSICS, Volume XXIII. New York; The American-Scandinavian Foundation, 1924.

York; Mr. Longfellow, with several other interesting persons," to the slave markets of New Orleans and an Indian tepee in Minnesota. Henry Clay discusses politics with her in the midst of his speeches on the California Compromise; she sits next to Webster at dinner; President Fillmore drops in to call of an evening; Lowell shows her the wonders of Niagara. The great men and women of America in the fifties come and go familiarly, and she appraises them, admiringly and yet humorously, out of her shrewd little old maid's eyes.

New York impressed her in those days very much as it impresses the visitor from abroad to-day. "When crossing Broadway I think merely of getting to the other side alive." This in 1849! "I saw here none of Dickens's smoking and spitting gentlemen"—a corrective word for which America is her debtor. "It is said that the merchants of New York go over to Brooklyn to sleep." Clearly there is nothing new about that familiar jest. "I cannot help admiring the skill with which the drivers here manage to get out of the way, twisting about, shooting between, and disentangling themselves without misadventure from real Gordian knots of carts and carriages. It is remarkable, but not pleasant." Is this New York of 1849 or of 1924? "Is there anything in the world more wearisome, more dismal, more intolerable, more reckless, more sumptuous, more unbearable, anything more calculated to kill both soul and body, than a big dinner in New York?" And finally, "New York is the last city in the world in which I would live. But then it is to be regarded merely as a vast hotel, a caravanserai both for America and Europe."

To temper the influence of New York, Miss Bremer made a visit at Newburgh, where Washington Irving came to dinner. "He was my neighbor at table, and I did not blame him for becoming sleepy; nor did I feel responsible this time when people told me that he was accustomed to be sleepy at big dinners, at which I certainly am not surprised." But he was not too sleepy to invite her to his own house, where he charmed her by his cordiality—"a sage without wrinkles or gray hair."

Then to Boston, where Miss Bremer found many things to enjoy, and one cordially to detest—the American furnace, "which, I am sure, has some secret relationship with the fiery furnace of Biblical tradition, and seems to be invented for the express purpose of destroying human nerves and lungs." Her first meeting with Emerson left her uncertain. "He interested me without warming me." She found "that critical, cold and crystalline nature" doubtless very estimable, but chillingly remote. And yet the same letter closes with a characteristic note: "P. S. I must tell you that I am not sure that I have judged rightly of Emerson." Later, as she saw more of him, she to some extent recast her estimate. "That which struck me most, as distinguishing him from other human beings, is nobility. He is a born



nobleman." But she had little use for the affectations of the rest of the Concord Transcendentalists. Emerson was the one Alp; "the others seem to me to stretch themselves out, and to powder themselves, merely to look lofty and snow-crowned, but that does not help them. Their brows are in the clouds, instead of towering above them." Bronson Alcott was absolutely too much for her. "The man is incorrigible. He drinks too much water, and brings forth merely hazy and cloudy ideas. He should drink wine and eat meat, or at least fish, so that there might be marrow and substance in his ideas."

Longfellow and the Lowells, however, Miss Bremer found charming; no lack of fish, meat, or wine there! The poet Lowell particularly delighted her, though "singularly enough, I did not discern in him that profound, serious spirit which charmed me in many of his poems. He seems to me to be predominantly brilliant, witty, gay, especially in the evening when he has what he calls his 'evening fever,' and his talk is then an incessant play of fireworks." Longfellow introduced her to American champagne, "made from the Catawba grape at Cincinnati," which she found "especially good." She attended and humorously described a "sewing bee" given by Mrs. Sparks, wife of the president of Harvard. Whittier called on her, and instantly won her admiration. "He belongs to those natures who would advance with firmness and joy to martyrdom in a good cause, and yet who are never comfortable in society, and look occasionally as though they would like to run out of the door."

Not all of Miss Bremer's time in Boston was spent among the intellectual notables. At "a large party of Boston fashionables" she observed a company which struck her as "showy and aristocratic rather than pleasant." "I was told that Mrs. So-and-So and her sister had spent a year in Paris. They ought to have brought thence a little Parisian grace and common sense as well as fashion." Miss Bremer was too well-disposed to devote much time to pricking bubbles, but when she felt so inclined, she did it with highly efficacious brevity.

She was deeply interested in the religious life of Boston. A sermon by "a young preacher from the West," Henry Ward Beecher, stirred her profoundly. Unitarianism aroused in her more curiosity than enthusiasm. "The preacher prays an infinitely long prayer, which has the inconvenience of saying altogether too much, of using too many words, and yet of not saying what any single individual ought to say."

From Boston, by way of New York again, Miss Bremer went to Charleston, South Carolina, and here, of course, slavery became the great subject of conversation. "One thing which astonishes and annoys me here, and which I did not expect to find, is that I hardly ever meet a man, or woman either, who can openly and honestly look the thing in the face." Her own views on slavery were, of course,

sharply defined, and they gathered strength as she went among the slaves themselves, but for all that she showed an extraordinary broad-mindedness in her ability to understand the point of view of her slave-owning hosts and hostesses. The picturesqueness of the South, and above all of the negro life, appealed to her enormously, and her letters written from Charleston and Savannah are full of admirable bits of first-hand description. But from Columbia, South Carolina, she wrote: "There is nothing very remarkable here, unless it be the great number of colonels." And, to conclude her Southern experiences: "Bananas, negroes, and negro songs are the greatest refreshments of the mind which I have found in the United States."

Miss Bremer's next visit was in Philadelphia, where she was profoundly interested by the Quakers. Here, as in Boston, she was able to understand and be stirred, and yet to retain the shrewdness of her judgment. But whereas Unitarian Boston spoke to her through vivid individuals, Quaker Philadelphia lacked the eloquence of personality. She sat through a Quaker meeting for an hour or more, oppressed by the heat and the dead stillness. "I kept thinking the whole time, 'Will not the Spirit move some of the assembly?' But no! The Spirit moved not one. An old gentleman coughed, and I sneezed, and the leaves of the trees moved softly outside the window. This was the only movement I perceived. The Spirit was deep, perhaps, but it did not come out of the depth into the day. As discipline, these silent meetings may, in any case, be excellent."

From Philadelphia Miss Bremer went to Washington, and there the whole pageant of the nation's political life unfolded itself. The stage setting was provided by the anti-slavery movement and the admission of California to the Union; the dramatic climax was the death of President Taylor. Across the stage passed one after another of the great figures of the day: the leonine Webster; the fiery Clay; picturesque Sam Houston, "cutting bits of wood with his penknife during all the discussions in the Senate"; Hale, "with a head not unlike that of Napoleon, and a body like a great, fat boy"; Seward, with his nasal voice; Douglas, already aflame with ambition for the presidency; Benton, "the hawk from Missouri, with his bowie-knife in his breast pocket"; and so on. She listened to the debates in the Senate and House, and afterwards talked with the leaders at dinner. The Senate, in those far-off days, still had dignity; the House was pervaded by "a certain kind of hurry-scurry." She quotes approvingly the remark of a friend, called forth by praise of the American talent for talking: "It is a great misfortune." The letters from Washington are neither numerous nor long, but they are amazingly filled with life.

Then follows the journey westward; first to Rochester, at that time nationally famed as the home of spirit rappings, presided over by two young ladies. "The first glance at the two sisters convinced

me that, whatever spirits they might be in communication with, they were not of a spiritually respectable class." Whereupon this eminently prim old maid called the spirits all the names she could think of in Swedish, "but evidently the spirits did not understand that language." From Rochester she went to Chicago, and here, and later at Pine Lake, Wisconsin, she visited the first large colonies of Swedes. She foresaw a vast future in this new land for Scandinavian emigrants. "A new Scandinavia shall one day bloom in the valley of the Mississippi," a prophecy which time has fulfilled. At Madison, Wisconsin, "the minister preached a sermon strongly condemnatory of the gentlemen of the West. All his hope was in the ladies." St. Paul, then but eighteen months old, was thronged with Indians, who "paint themselves so utterly without any taste that it is incredible." Here again she had the spirit of prophecy: "This Minnesota is a glorious country, and just the country for Northern emigrants—for a new Scandinavia." But her shrewd sense of fact instantly tempered her enthusiasm: "Seriously, though, Scandinavians who are well off in the Old Country ought not to leave it." Another bit of keen prophecy: "This is an excellent country for young servants. A young Norwegian woman lives as cook with Governor Ramsay. She is not above twenty, and is not remarkably clever as a cook, yet she receives eleven dollars per month wages."

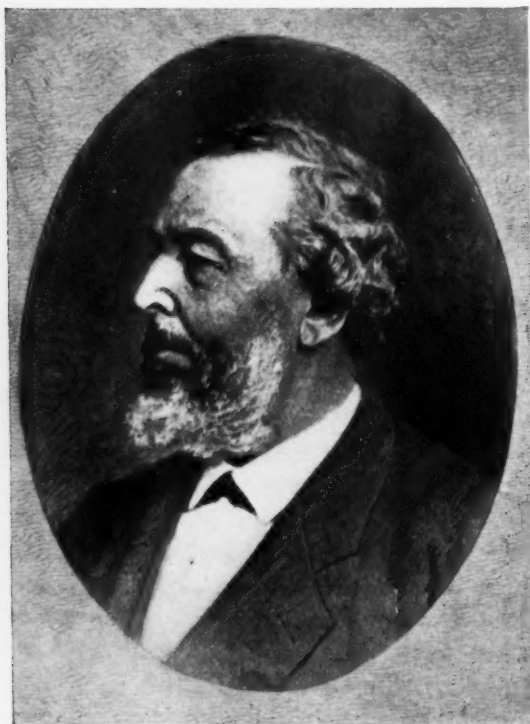
Down the Mississippi to New Orleans, where Miss Bremer saw a slave auction, and described it with a sympathetic understanding unstained by sentimentality. Then to Havana, and back, by way of Florida, northward through Charleston and Richmond to Boston once more, Nahant and the White Mountains. Finally, before returning to Europe, another visit to New York, where Miss Bremer varied her social activities by going to see Five Points and the Tombs prison. And so, with a warm farewell to the people she understood so well, back to the country she loved.

It is an extraordinary document, this record of America in 1850, making history alive and luminous. And because, in those days, visitors from abroad saw this country as a rule only as through a glass darkly, every American, whether or not of Scandinavian ancestry, owes a special debt of gratitude to this remarkable Swedish novelist who had the opportunity and the shrewdness to understand American life as it really was, the skill to set it forth with vitality, and above all that detached, humorous, kindly personality which won for her the title of "maiden aunt of all the world."

## "Skald" Taylor's Visit to Iceland

By ADOLPH B. BENSON

" . . . In a place so remote and original in its character [as Iceland] everything that happens seems to bear a certain stamp of interest. If you step on a blossom, it may be an Arctic plant, unknown elsewhere; if a bird flies overhead, it is probably an eider duck; if a boy speaks in the street, he may use the words made venerable by the *Eddas* of Saemund and Snorre Sturlusson. Isolation, separate development, prevalence of elements that have perished in other lands, make Iceland a study by itself. Scarcely anything that I have learned in former travel, even in Sweden and Norway, explains the feature of life here. Anchored in the middle of the Northern Ocean, between two continents, the island belongs but very slightly to either."



BAYARD TAYLOR

So wrote Bayard Taylor from the capital city of Iceland, just half a century ago. Up to that time Iceland had been almost an unknown quantity in America, so far as the general public was concerned. The scholarly labors of such men as Elihu Burritt, George P. Marsh, and Professor Willard Fiske had borne but little fruit outside the antiquarian societies and universities, and

it fell to the lot of "Skald Taylor of America," as he was called by the Icelanders, to introduce the island to his own people in a more popular way. Now, therefore, when America, Germany, and other countries are preparing to celebrate the centennial of the birth of Bayard Taylor—in January, 1925—it will not be amiss to recall this phase of his life and activity.

His trip to Iceland came about as follows. America's "ideal traveler," linguist, journalist, translator, novelist, and poet—to recall the extraordinary versatility of Bayard Taylor—had been delegated by Whitelaw Reid of the New York *Tribune* to report for that paper



the Millennial celebration commemorating the first settlement of Iceland. Taylor was busy elsewhere at the time, but was anxious to please Reid and *The Tribune*—which he always referred to as his own Alma Mater—so he accepted the task. He had been offered a berth on a specially chartered steamer, the freighter *Albion*, and, to cover the English law, sailed as a registered seaman, from Scotland, in July, 1874, with a nominal “backsheesh of one shilling per month.” Eventually he contributed twelve long letters to his newspaper, the subject of which went far beyond the scope of the Millennial, the author realizing the opportunity and necessity for supplying a variety of literary and historical detail not needed in the description of other places. So the American public received one hundred and thirty book pages of sympathetic material on Iceland, a material which was republished immediately in *Egypt and Iceland* (1874).

Neither Taylor himself nor his readers were disappointed in his trip to Iceland. With the possible exception of Marsh and Fiske, he was the American best qualified for the undertaking. His broad and open mind, his power of discrimination, and his travels all over the world, had given him a standard and a background which insured moderation and truth in the reports. Nothing escaped his notice, yet the ordinary journalistic verbosity and exaggeration were lacking. And for almost thirty years he had been immensely interested in certain features of the Scandinavian North. The first one of his poems to elicit the commendation of an acknowledged poet (Whittier) had been *The Norseman's Ride*; he had been so fascinated by *Frithiofs Saga*, in the forties, that in 1867 he had become the first editor of a complete American edition of that classic; his trip to Newfoundland, in 1855, had been enjoyed “with an *arrière pensée* for Norway;” in 1856-1857 he had traversed the Scandinavian peninsula from Ystad to the North Cape—on foot, by cart, by steamer, or by pulka—publishing the account of his experiences in book form under the title of *Northern Travel*; and he had acquired an exceptional command of Swedish, a working knowledge of Danish, and, through earlier acquaintance with the archæologist Rafn of Copenhagen, had absorbed not a little Icelandic. Moreover, Taylor's aptitude for learning a new language was proverbially phenomenal. Then, also, while in Stockholm, Taylor had, through the systematic practice of Swedish gymnastics, added a much-needed viking vigor to his physical body; and in 1873 he had published his notable narrative poem: *Lars: A Pastoral of Norway*. It was Taylor who had written the “unfortunate” Jenny Lind Prize Poem in P. T. Barnum's enterprising competition, which had been set to music and sung by Miss Lind at her first concert in Castle Garden and which had brought the author more abuse and notoriety from disappointed competitors than any other verses in America had ever brought or could bring to anybody. But it had also brought the young

American into a delightful acquaintance with Jenny Lind herself, which in his own mind rekindled a deeper interest in the singer's race. About the same time he had met Fredrika Bremer, and later he visited Hans Christian Andersen in Copenhagen. We see, then, that Bayard Taylor was anything but a stranger in things Scandinavian: in reality he occupied a distinct place in the history of American-Scandinavian cultural relations.

As for the "handful of old Scandinavians in Iceland," says Taylor, they "preserve for the scholars of our day a philological and historical interest such as no equal number of men have ever achieved in the annals of the world." And this in 1874 from a cosmopolitan observer who used superlatives sparingly! Iceland was the only land in Christendom, he pointed out, where the laymen had been as zealous, if not better, scholars and authors than the monks, and where Christianity had actually effected a conversion of the heathen sagas into permanent chronicles instead of suppressing or destroying them as in the rest of Europe where monkish influence predominated. Possessed of a sturdy national life, Iceland produced during the darkest ages of Europe a literary culture which was "almost phenomenal." Taylor was not a scholar, nor an historian, perhaps; but his conviction that a knowledge of the early Norse voyages must have been current in Iceland in a form which made it useful to Columbus when he sailed about in that region is not wholly preposterous, and shows Taylor's favorable attitude toward the achievements of the Northmen.

Taylor, who had lived the life of every place from the California gold-fields to the city of Damascus, found that the pure, delicate air about the horns, peaks, and turfy shores of Iceland reminded him of the Mediterranean and the Greek Archipelago; and its geology presented a far wilder and gloomier reality than Doré's illustrations of Dante. There were bright lakes, majestic fjords, fire-blackened mountains, and awful lava-plains, and, above all, those "steaming pillars"—the most imposing natural attraction in Iceland—which, incidentally, stubbornly refused to exhibit their special stunts before the Millennial crowd. King Christian IX of Denmark was present, and either out of timidity or independence the Great Geyser simply would not spout so long as the official party and guests were in attendance. But Taylor saw the Thingvalla "Forest," consisting of a few stunted birches and willows, three or four feet high, and mentions the only tree on the island, a mountain ash. The American was inclined to believe that some timber of birch, alder, or Scotch fir could be grown in Iceland if the experiment were seriously tried. Was Iceland ever wooded, as indicated in the sagas?—queries the reporter.

"As for Reykjavik," continues Taylor, "it is far from the dark, dirty, malodorous town which certain English and German travelers describe. The streets are broad and clean, the houses exceedingly cozy

and pleasant, the turf of the greenest, the circle of the fjord and mountains truly grand, and only the absence of any tree suggests its high latitude." Taylor surmises, however, that the city might have been cleaned up for the occasion.

But our writer is most of all interested in the Icelandic people. He found the race honest and unselfish in its "murmuring endurance." The common people—"if one has a right to use the word *common* in referring to such people"—were somewhat of a puzzle to him. They were stoic and indifferent, intensely curious and still not obtrusive. "I notice," says Taylor, "something of the same quiet dignity, which is characteristic of the upper classes, also among the common people. It must be a chief feature of the Gothic blood, for it exists in the same form in Spain and some provinces of Sweden. Such men will take your pay and serve you faithfully, but you must never forget to treat them as equals. The impression which the Icelanders have made upon me, thus far, is unexpectedly agreeable. I am convinced that I should find the ways of the people easy to adopt, and that, once adopting (or at least respecting) them, I should encounter none but friends all over the island."

The special object of Taylor's admiration was a modest, sweet-tempered boy, Geir, who discussed foreign authors with the American, in both English and German, and who, whenever the meaning of the conversation became obscure through some linguistic difficulty, persisted in requesting his American friend to give it in Latin, which the boy understood perfectly. "And this was a poor, fatherless boy of seventeen, with only an Icelandic education," exclaims the awed poet, who more than once had been embarrassed by the suggestions of this native youth. The following year, 1875, Taylor paid a tribute to such as Geir in *The Story of Jon of Iceland*, which appeared in *St. Nicholas* magazine.

The following extracts will illustrate further the character of Taylor's letters from Iceland, and tell the story of his observations there:

"As soon as our steamer was fairly moored last evening [July 29], we got into boats and went ashore. There is a beach there three or four hundred yards long, with several wooden jetties running down into the water, the rise of the tide here being seventeen feet. . . . Smooth streets of volcanic sand and gravel, with flagged sidewalks; square wooden houses, which seemed stately in comparison with those of Thorshavn [on the Faroe Islands]; merchants' store-houses, without signs, yet generally thronged with people; little gardens of cauliflower, radishes, and turnips; white curtains, pots of geranium, mignonette, and roses in the windows—such were the features of the place which first caught the eye . . ."

"I . . . turned to inspect the crowd, and found to my surprise that the women were much more picturesque than the men. . . . Some of the girls had their hair braided, but many wore it loose, and I saw one maiden whose magnificent pale yellow mane suggested a descent from Brynhilde. The men showed only two colors—the brown of their *wadmál* coats and trousers and the ruddy tan of their faces. Few of them are handsome, and their faces are grave and undemonstrative; but they inspire confidence by the simple strength expressed in the steady blue eye and the firm set of the lips. There were plenty of tawny or piebald ponies with manes like lions in the streets. I suppose many healths must have been drunk during the day, for the old Norse habit still flourishes here; but I saw only one man somewhat unsteady on his legs, while he managed to keep his face sober. . . ."

"In the afternoon we made a number of visits. Bishop Pjeturson first received us, and with a gentle, refined courtesy becoming his station. Conversation was carried on in French with himself, in English with his son, and in Danish with his wife. A bottle of champagne was produced, and the kind hosts touched glasses with us, in welcome to Iceland. We explained our object in coming, told of the interest felt by our countrymen in this rare historical anniversary, and claimed kinship of blood on the score of the early relationship of Goth and Saxon, and our own later infusion of the Norman element. There is no Ice-lander—no Scandinavian, indeed—but knows and is proud of the race from which he descended."

"The best houses in the town are very much alike in structure and internal arrangement. There is usually a little hall or ante-room, about large enough to pull off an overcoat in, then the study or reception room of the owner, according to his profession, and beyond it the *salon* where the ladies receive their guests. . . . A carpet on the floor, a sofa, centre-table with books and photographs, and pictures on the walls are the invariable features of this apartment; and in spite of the lowness of the ceiling and other primitive architectural characteristics, it is always cheerful, bright, and agreeable. Rocking-chairs are not uncommon, and the guest easily forgets both latitude and locality as he looks out upon currant bushes and potato plants, while conversing with an earnest-faced young lady upon Shakespeare, German literature, or the latest music."

It had been decided on the *Albion* that the American party should take some unofficial part in the Millennial exercises in the Reykjavik Cathedral. Consequently, Taylor, "in all haste, in the midst of distracting talk," wrote the following greeting, which, though it made no claim to an abiding poetic merit, well suited the occasion:



## AMERICA TO ICELAND

*We come, the children of thy Vinland,  
The youngest of the world's high peers,  
O land of steel, and song, and saga,  
To greet thy glorious thousand years!*

*Across that sea the son of Erik  
Dared with his venturous dragon's prow,  
From shores where Thorfinn set thy banner,  
Their latest children seek thee now.*

*Hail mother-land of skalds and heroes,  
By love of freedom hither hurled,  
Fire in their hearts as in thy mountains,  
And strength like thine to shake the world!*

*When war and ravage wrecked the nations,  
The bird of song made thee her home;  
The ancient gods, the ancient glory,  
Still dwelt within thy shores of foam.*

*Here as a fount may keep its virtue,  
While all the rivers turbid run,  
The manly growth of deed and daring  
Was thine beneath a scantier sun.*

*Set far apart, neglected, exiled,  
Thy children wrote her runes of pride,  
With power that brings, in this thy triumph,  
The conquering nations to thy side.*

*What though thy native harps be silent,  
The chord they struck shall ours prolong:  
We claim thee kindred, call thee mother,  
O land of saga, steel, and song!*

"Our friend Erik Magnússon immediately took this greeting ashore, where it was translated into Icelandic by Mathias Jochumsson, the poet, who has given Shakespeare's *Lear* and *Macbeth* admirably in Icelandic. . . ."

"Now, when all other greetings had apparently come to an end, Magnússon took the stand, and in an eloquent speech referred to the presence of the American party. This drew all eyes upon us, and was rather embarrassing, although inevitable; but the interest and good-will of the people were clearly evident. When the address was finished, the Mayor of Reykjavik, Sveinbjörnsson, announced that the skald T[aylor] of America would reply. All the aforesaid 'skald' was able to do was to state, in most imperfect Danish, that he was not sufficiently master of the language to express fully the feelings of himself and friends; he could only assure the people of Iceland that

we thanked them with all our hearts for their recognition of our fatherland, and then closed with 'Hail to Iceland and the whole Norse race!'—which the people received with hearty cheers, the King leading."

As a return compliment for translating his own greeting into Icelandic, Taylor rendered into English a poetic Icelandic welcome to Christian IX, which constituted a part of the meeting at Thingvalla.

After an elaborate dinner of imported dishes, speeches and toasts, came the people's festival on the eastern hill. "The road thither," reports Taylor, "led past the prison, which is altogether the finest building in Reykjavik. But, alas for the wisdom of those who decreed its erection!—it waits in vain for an inmate. The smooth-cut walls of gray lava-stone, the cheerful cells, the spacious prison-yard invite some one to be culprit and enjoy their idle luxuries; but the people are too ignorant to accept the call."

(*At Thingvalla, August 7, while waiting for the Great Geyser to spout.*) The scene in the morning was curious. We took our toilet articles, and went, half-dressed, to the hollow between the Geyser and the spring, where the surplus overthrow is shallow and lukewarm. It was already occupied; a royal chamberlain was scooping up water in his hands, an admiral was dipping his tooth-brush into the stream, a Copenhagen professor was laboriously shaving himself by the aid of a looking-glass stuck in a crack of the crater, and the King, neat and fresh as if at home, stood on the bank and amused himself with the sight. The quality of the water is exquisite; it is like down and velvet to the skin, soap becomes a finer substance in it, and the refreshment given to the hands and face serves to permeate the whole body."



## Current Events

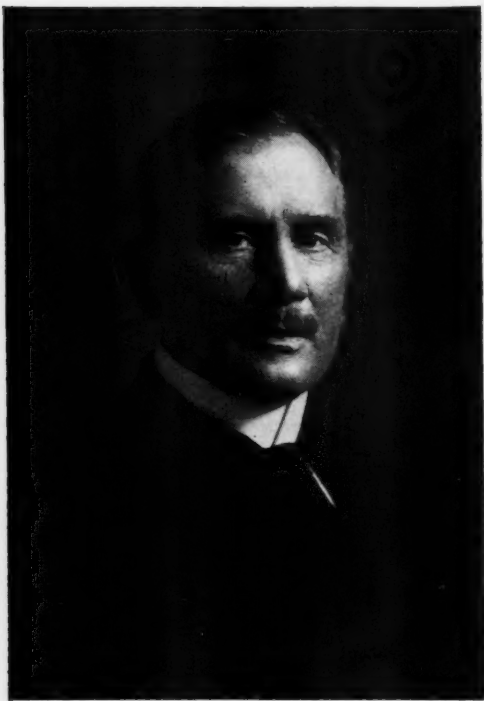
### U. S. A.

¶ With the Presidential election in sight the three parties in the race renewed their activity to the utmost, the candidates making their personal appeal in quarters where the political need of the hour seemed the greatest. ¶ Speaking for the Republican party, Secretary Hoover declared that La Follette's plan for government ownership of railroads and public utilities would add \$40,000,000,000 to the public debt of the nation. ¶ Radio broadcasting has been utilized wherever possible. As the chief speaker at the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the assembling of the Continental Congress, held in Philadelphia, President Coolidge took occasion to defend the courts as against the attacks made upon them by the Third Party leaders, headed by Senator La Follette.

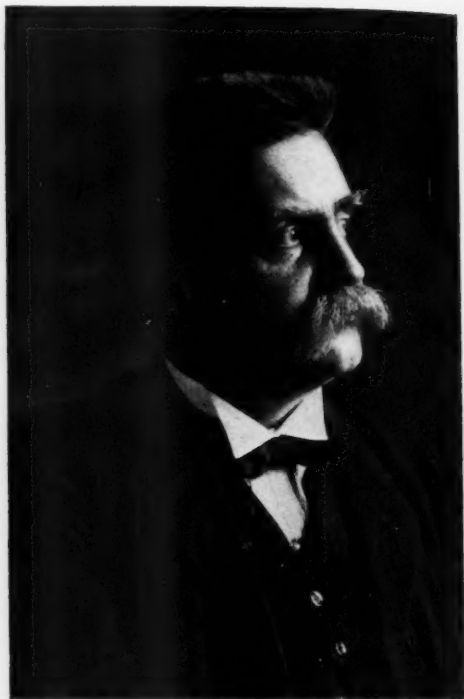
¶ With regard to the Davis campaign, Democratic leaders appear to be relying on the power of La Follette to win ballots in Republican states. Mark Sullivan, one of the shrewdest political observers, writes in the New York *Herald-Tribune* that complications are mounting up everywhere so that it is difficult to get a clear view of the situation.

¶ So far as the political outlook concerns New York State, the nomination of Theodore Roosevelt jr. on the Republican ticket for governor in opposition to Governor Smith, renominated for the place, offers a curious phase of political expediency in the eyes of the leaders of both major parties. There are those who believe, however, that he is likely to surprise many who look upon his nomination as merely an effort to reap the benefit of his father's reputation. ¶ Apart from the campaign one of the outstanding events has been the Defense Day demonstration, which provoked a great deal of discussion pro and con before it took place. In spite of considerable opposition, the demonstration was held successfully, General Pershing speaking by radio to what is said to be the largest audience ever to hear a broadcasted address. General Pershing, in explaining the meaning of Defense Day, said that those who criticised it as encouraging war misunderstood the test, and that while there were no war clouds on the horizon, "storms often appear out of a clear sky and then it may be too late to prepare."

¶ Carrying with him an Executive order in which the thanks of the nation were again extended to him, General Pershing retired to the inactive list at noon on September 13. He is succeeded by Major General John Hines, who commanded the Third Army Corps in the World War. ¶ Completing their around-the-world flight after covering 27,534 miles in 5 months and 22 days, the navy airmen were given an enthusiastic welcome on their return to America. The total flying time was approximately 371 hours on sixty different days. ¶ Captain Donald B. MacMillan has returned from his 15 months' expedition to northern Greenland.



FORMER PRIME MINISTER ERNST TRYGGER



HJALMAR BRANTING, NEW GOVERNMENT HEAD

### Sweden

¶ The final count of the election for the Second Chamber of the Riksdag which has just been made here shows relatively few changes, no party having gained an absolute majority in the Riksdag. The Social-Democrats, however, remain by far the strongest party, holding forty seats more in the Riksdag than the Conservatives. As a result the Conservative ministry headed by Mr. Trygger has resigned, and the King has asked Hjalmar Branting, the Socialist leader to form a government. ¶ The final figures of the election are: Social-Democrats 104; Conservatives 64; Liberals 33; Farmers Union 24; Communists 5. The Social-Democrats have gained 5; the Conservatives 2; and the Farmers Union 3; while the Liberals have lost 8; and the Communists 2. The further weakening of the Communist Party is considered significant, especially as the well-known Communist, Kilbom, leader of the faithful adherent to Moscow, was defeated. ¶ The annual election for the First Chamber, a sixth of whose members are elected annually, was in one instance very sensational. Among those whose terms expired was the well-known parliamentarian Baron Teodor Adelswärd of Östergötland, long a leader in Swedish politics and Minister of Finance in Staaff's Government of 1911-14. In this same Cabinet, Consul-General David Bergström was Minister



of War. Since his return to Sweden, Bergström has begun again to interest himself in politics and has joined the Liberal party; while Adelswärd at the break in the old Liberal party last autumn joined the Liberal Reform party, the group more favorable to national defense. The Liberal party at the last minute nominated Bergström and with aid of the Social-Democrats elected him to Adelswärd's place. ¶ A parlor revolution, mirth-provoking but in a way serious enough, has occurred in the capital's Communistic circles. The editor of the Communistic *Folkets Dagblad Politiken*, Z. Höglund, although considered lacking in force by the Russian leaders, had nevertheless received a majority vote of the Swedish party and hence retained his command of the paper. Meanwhile there had come to Stockholm some Soviet representatives designated mysteriously as "Ex. R." With the aid of the newspaper's economic leader, Kilbom, a representative in the Riksdag, they surprised the editorial staff one night, forbade the personnel to set up Höglund's articles, demanded obedience to the new management, took a stand in the street, and blocked all entrances so successfully that the old management found it best to leave, though under protest. Since then the paper has been in the hands of the "orthodox" Communists, but the affair may have its sequel within the party congress. It is generally deplored that Höglund did not appeal to the police.



THE CONSERVATIVE LEADER, ADMIRAL LINDMAN



THE LIBERAL LEADER, ELIEL LÖFGREN

## Denmark

¶ While the League of Nations was finding the disarmament question an outstanding matter for debate at Geneva, in Denmark the proposal of the Minister of Defense, L. Rasmussen, for a reduction of the country's military and naval establishments to a minimum begins to assume a strong political aspect, with lines sharply drawn. ¶ That the Social-Democratic regime has centered his activity on possible disarmament as a means for retaining its political hold on the country is everywhere evident. The party now in power is making much of Premier Stauning's interview with Ramsay MacDonald at Geneva, when the latter is said to have grown enthusiastic over the Danish proposal to lead the world in disarmament. ¶ *Social-Demokraten*, the organ of the party, puts emphasis on Hr. Borgbjerg's statement that MacDonald's expression is exactly what the Social-Democratic party always had advocated, namely, that disarmament alone means safety, and that "if the big countries do not wish to make a start the little nations should." ¶ *Berlingske Tidende* strikes an entirely different note. In a series of editorials and articles by leading men of the country this newspaper belittles the efforts of the Government in its haste to make its proposal into law. Of Premier Stauning's return from Geneva, *Berlingske Tidende* says that a happy man is coming home "with food for his young ones," meaning the adherents of the regime. ¶ As for Minister Rasmussen, he appears nothing daunted by the political attacks of his adversaries, and at a cabinet meeting he laid before his colleagues the exact terms of his proposal. In place of the present army there is to be a reserve corps of police, whose duty it shall be to fulfill Denmark's obligations as a member of the League of Nations. ¶ Instead of the present naval vessels there will be smaller, swift ships, armed in such a way as to be able to aid the customs officers. With regard to airships it is possible that there will be a strengthening of the fleet. The annual expenses are placed at eleven million kroner. ¶ At a peace gathering in Odense, Minister Rasmussen declared that the objections of the Conservative party were exactly those of the eighties and the nineties, when the question of defense was an issue between the Right and Left. ¶ Considerable attention is being paid in Denmark to the reaction to the disarmament question in the neighboring countries of Norway and Sweden. ¶ *Tidens Tegn* of Kristiania declares that "in Denmark the Socialists announce complete disarmament without regard for what the rest of the world will do. In Norway there is beautiful agreement between Socialists and Communists as to the destruction of defense. The same is the case in Finland. But as yet the defense nihilism has not the power. In Sweden it has no influence worth mentioning. Even the Swedish Socialists desire that their country shall be able to defend its independence and liberty."

## Norway

¶ The Norwegian Institute of Comparative Cultural Research, to which the State and Kristiania Municipality have granted 1,000,000 kroner each, was opened September 3 in the presence of the King. Among the distinguished foreign lecturers this term are Professor Vinogradoff of Oxford and Professor Meillet of Paris. ¶ The bankruptcy of Captain Roald Amundsen has caused general regret in Norway. According to *Tidens Tegn*, he thinks himself solvent, but wishes to have his affairs officially cleared up. His assets consist of the ship *Maud*, which is his personal property, and two villas near Kristiania. The creditors are chiefly Americans. It is believed that the expedition with the *Maud* will be completed in spite of Captain Amundsen's bankruptcy, the Government probably granting the money. ¶ A new mysterious and extremely contagious disease appeared at Namdalen, northern Norway, in the beginning of September. The affected persons suffered violent pains in the limbs and black eruptions over the body. One of the patients was treated at the municipal hospital at Kristiania where a doctor and several nurses caught the disease. The highest medical authorities say that the disease is hitherto unknown and quite inexplicable, but not dangerous. ¶ The threatening strike in the Norwegian paper industry has been averted, the employers' and the workers' organizations accepting the new wages tariff, proposed by the public mediator. The workers obtained an increase of wages of about 10 per cent. ¶ In a letter of August 18 to the Secretary General of the League of Nations the Norwegian premier and foreign minister, Johan Ludwig Mowinckel, says that Norway can not accept the proposed pact of mutual guarantee. The Norwegian Government is greatly interested in general disarmament, but is of opinion that this can not be obtained by the conclusion of a general military guarantee pact supplemented by regional defensive alliances. The proposed pact, it is said, may lead to the forming of new groups of states containing germs of new wars. ¶ A commercial treaty between Norway and Latvia, based on most favored treatment, was signed at Kristiania August 15 by the Norwegian premier and the secretary of the Latvian Foreign Department. ¶ The fifth Norwegian Industrial Fair was opened at Kristiania September 1 by the Minister of Commerce, Mr. Meling, in the presence of the King and the Queen. The fair, which lasted a week, was a great success, the visitors numbering about 70,000. ¶ Crown Prince Olav has completed his three years' course at the Military Academy, Kristiania, and obtained his commission as lieutenant in the Norwegian Army. The Prince passed the final examination with excellent marks in all subjects, being the first in his class. The King and Queen attended the closing festivities of the Academy, and the King presented the institution with a painting of the Crown Prince.

# An American Book Table

Title	FICTION	Author	Publisher
OLD NEW YORK.....	Edith Wharton	Appleton	
A LOST LADY.....	Willa Cather	Knopf	
SO BIG.....	Edna Ferber	Doubleday	
THE AVALANCHE.....	Ernest Poole	Macmillan	
BALISAND.....	Joseph Hergesheimer	Knopf	
THE MIDLANDER.....	Booth Tarkington	Doubleday	
THE RED RIDERS.....	Thomas Nelson Page	Scribner	
THE LITTLE FRENCH GIRL.....	Anne Douglas Sedgwick	Houghton, Mifflin	
THE BEST SHORT STORIES OF 1923.....	Edward J. O'Brien	Small, Maynard	
THE HOME-MAKER.....	Dorothy Canfield	Harcourt, Brace	
THE NEEDLE'S EYE.....	Arthur Train	Scribner	
POETRY AND DRAMA			
COMPLETE POEMS.....	Emily Dickinson	Little, Brown	
SONGS AND BALLADS OF THE MAINE LUMBERJACKS.....	Roland P. Gray (ed.)	Harvard University	
HELL-BENT FER HEAVEN.....	Hatcher Hughes	Harper	
EXPRESSING WILLIE; NICE PEOPLE; 39 EAST.....	Rachel Crothers	Brentano's	
SELECTED POEMS.....	Robert Frost	Henry Holt	
THE POTTERS; AN AMERICAN COMEDY.....	J. P. McEvoy	Reilly & Lee	
GENERAL LITERATURE			
A LATE HARVEST.....	Charles W. Eliot	Atlantic	
UNDER DISPUTE.....	Agnes Repplier	Houghton, Mifflin	
MY DEAR CORNELIA.....	Stuart P. Sherman	Atlantic	
THE EDITOR AND HIS PEOPLE.....	William Allen White	Macmillan	
A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN DRAMA.....	Arthur Hobson Quinn	Harper	
TRAVEL AND DESCRIPTION			
GALÁPAGOS: WORLD'S END.....	William Beebe	Putnam	
BEAUTIFUL AMERICA.....	Vernon Quinn	Stokes	
AROUND THE WORLD IN NEW YORK.....	Konrad Bercovici	Century	
AMERICAN SOCIAL HISTORY AS RECORDED BY BRIT- ISH TRAVELERS.....	Allan Nevins (ed.)	Atlantic	
ISLES OF EDEN.....	Laura Lee Davison	Minton, Balch	
BIOGRAPHY AND REMINISCENCES			
THEODORE ROOSEVELT.....	Lord Charnwood	Atlantic	
WILLARD STRAIGHT.....	Herbert Croly	Macmillan	
FROM IMMIGRANT TO INVENTOR.....	Michael Pupin	Scribner	
ROBERT BACON, LIFE AND LETTERS.....	James Brown Scott	Doubleday	
MY CRYSTAL BALL.....	Elisabeth Marbury	Boni & Liveright	
THREE GENERATIONS.....	Maud Howe Elliott	Little, Brown	
GARRULITIES OF AN OCTOGENARIAN EDITOR.....	Henry Holt	Houghton, Mifflin	
REMEMBERED YESTERDAYS.....	Robert Underwood Johnson	Little, Brown	
HISTORY AND POLITICS			
EUROPE 1450-1789; EUROPE SINCE 1789.....	Edward R. Turner	Doubleday, Page	
ETERNAL ROME.....	Grant Showerman	Yale University	
THE BOOK OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN; pictured by Frederic Remington.....	Hamlin Garland	Harper	
AMERICAN REVOLUTION.....	Charles H. McIlwain	Macmillan	
ABSENTEE OWNERSHIP AND BUSINESS ENTERPRISE IN RECENT TIMES.....	Thorstein B. Veblen	Huebsch	
RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY			
FIVE PRESENT DAY CONTROVERSIES.....	Charles Jefferson	Revell	
TWELVE TESTS OF CHARACTER.....	Harry Emerson Fosdick	Doran	
FIFTY YEARS.....	William Lawrence	Houghton, Mifflin	
WAYS TO PEACE: TWENTY PLANS SUBMITTED TO THE AMERICAN PEACE AWARD.....	Esther E. Lape (ed.)	Scribner	
THE ARTS			
AMERICAN ARTISTS.....	Royal Cortisoz	Scribner	
STICKS AND STONES: A STUDY OF AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE AND CIVILIZATION.....	Lewis Mumford	Boni & Liveright	
GREEK AND ROMAN SCULPTURE IN AMERICAN COLLECTIONS.....	George Henry Chase	Harvard University	
OUR AMERICAN THEATRE.....	Oliver M. Saylor	Brentano's	
		A. C. R.	



## Books

*Publications in English Translated from the Scandinavian or Dealing with Scandinavian Subjects*

### Biography:

*Mårbacka.* By SELMA LAGERLÖF. Translated by Velma Swanston Howard. Doubleday, Page & Company.

This autobiographical work by Sweden's most beloved author is being reviewed by Genevieve Larsson in this number.

### Travel:

*America of the Fifties: Letters of Fredrika Bremer.* Selected and Edited by Adolph B. Benson. SCANDINAVIAN CLASSICS, Volume XXIII. The American-Scandinavian Foundation.

The Letters of Fredrika Bremer are the subject of an article by Mr. Bellows in this number.

### Drama:

*Moses and Other Plays.* By AUGUST STRINDBERG. Translated from the Swedish by Edwin Björkman. Scribner.

This volume, the fifth in the series published by Scribner's, contains *The Father*, *The Black Glove*, *The Pelican*, and *Moses*.

### Fairy Tales:

*Norwegian Fairy Tales; from the Collection of Asbjørnsen and Moe.* Translated by Helen and John Gade. SCANDINAVIAN CLASSICS, Volume XXIV. The American-Scandinavian Foundation.

Norwegian Fairy Tales are discussed in an article by Mr. Blessum in this number. These old favorites, known in every Norwegian home, are now offered for the first time in a really American version, which reproduces the sprightliness and the colloquial ease of the original. The drawings of Kittelsen and Werenskiöld are reproduced with them.

*Fairy Tales by Hans Christian Andersen.* Illustrated with twelve full-page photos in color and many illustrations and decorations in black and white by Kay Nielsen. George H. Doran

The delicate and charming work of Kay Nielsen in this volume is worthy to rank with that of Edmund Dulac and Arthur Rackham. Mr. Nielsen, a Dane, is particularly at home with these Northern tales, and has achieved effects of a loveliness equal to his famous pictures in *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*.

### Fiction:

*A Pilgrimage.* By JOHAN BOJER. Translated from the Norwegian by Jessie Muir. The Century Company.

An unmarried mother gives up her child for adoption by unknown people, and her repentance and efforts to recover the child are the basis of the story.

*Marie: A Book of Love.* By PETER NANSEN. Translated by Julia Le Gallienne. John W. Luce and Company.

"This *Book of Love*, in spirit and expression a combination of *The Song of Songs*, and Gallic subtlety . . . shows that sometimes from the mire of pseudo-love a real love can spring. How this is accomplished is delicately told, although at times over-candidly according to Anglo-Saxon canons."—*Boston Transcript*.

*Shadows that Pass.* By OTTO RUNG. Translated from the Danish by Grace Isabel Colbron. Appleton.

A series of biographies held together by a common connection with one outstanding personality.

*We Three.* A novel by OLGA and ESTRID OTT. Authorized translation from the Danish by Albert Van Sand. Minton, Balch & Company.

The authors, who are mother and daughter, have written the story in the form of letters. It tells of a young girl whose parents are separated and who is living with her father. She acts on an impulse and writes to her mother, whom she does not know. Through the correspondence that ensues her estranged parents are brought together.

### Religion:

*Reasonable Religion: Emanuel Swedenborg. His Message and Teachings.* By E. GRAYLEY HODGETTS. Dutton.

Mr. Hodgetts gives a short biographical and critical sketch, followed by a readable and concise presentation of Swedenborg's philosophy.

## MÅRBÄCKA

**Mårbacka.** By Selma Lagerlöf. Translated by Velma Swanston Howard. New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1924.

*Mårbacka*, Selma Lagerlöf's autobiography, reads like an absorbing fairy tale. Naturally, and with her usual simplicity of style, the story unfolds. Characters spring to life in gorgeous pageantry; facts take on the magic of legend. She brushes them with the wings of her imagination, and lo! from the past the whole household, its ancestors, children, relatives, and the countless hordes of visitors at Mårbacka come trooping, beckoning us to intimate acquaintance. In a few words Miss Lagerlöf makes vivid and unforgettable a character, or paints a scene so warmly and humanly that it becomes alive.

The book (the publishers deserve high tribute for the decorative and artistic volume) is divided into five sections, the first dealing with Mårbacka when the author was a child. Always detached, Miss Lagerlöf here presents herself in the third person, as Selma. Back-Kaisa, the stern, implacable nurse-maid, whose hard hands knew not the way of handling a child, of whom the children were dreadfully afraid, becomes a passionately tender mother the instant she discovers that Selma has been stricken and can no longer walk. From that time on Selma rules supreme, is petted and spoiled and shown off to guests, will eat nothing but sweets and is "carried about, and waited on, day in and day out"! Until one day a little one in swaddling clothes appears, and then her supremacy is over! With whimsical humor the author reveals herself. The reader is one with the Mårbacka folk in their search for a cure for the child. Doctors and witches and health resort fail, until Selma, forgetting that she cannot walk, goes hunting for the Bird of Paradise, and finds a miracle. These are chapters for laughter and tears, perhaps the most charming in the book.

In *The Old Housekeeper's Tales* and

*Old Houses and Old People* we get the history of Mårbacka, from the time of the first hut built there. Miss Lagerlöf lets the living tide of memories sway her, and the result is a dazzling panorama of scenes and people. These are no broken snatches, no half-presented pictures, albeit they sprawl over a length of generations, but a story beautifully told on a large pattern in a rare fusion of fact and fancy. This blending of realism and fantasy (as embodied in the superstitions and legends of the people) is essentially Selma Lagerlöf. And because of these two, interwoven, she touches more closely than any other writer the very roots of life.

Next we see the growth of Mårbacka under Lieutenant Lagerlöf, her beloved and picturesque father, and her wise and understanding mother. Here again legends and stories enter. For every one at Mårbacka tells stories, from the grandmother to the housekeeper, and the lieutenant is by no means an exception! It ends with the big day, the Seventeenth of August, when the whole countryside, and visitors from afar, come to do honor to the Lieutenant's birthday. Ay, even the three Asa-gods appear, and the fairies and elves dance behind the dark copses!

To Lagerlöf readers *Mårbacka* will be of especial interest and delight, like meeting old friends and making new ones, for they will recognize characters from her other work. To those not familiar with the author it will serve as a guide, as a charming introduction. To me it is the greatest of all her work, because she has taken life itself and presented it in such a way that it is a living, moving tale.

It is fortunate, indeed, to have such a translator as Velma Swanston Howard, who in her passionate zeal has interpreted the very spirit back of Miss Lagerlöf's words in English that carries somehow the sound and flavor of the original, without losing any of its authenticity. This is, in itself, creative art.

GENEVIEVE LARSSON.

## The American-Scandinavian Foundation

*For better intellectual relations between the American and Scandinavian peoples, by means of an exchange of students, publications, and a Bureau of Information—*

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### Two New Fellowships

Our Associates, especially those who have had some part in the Fellowship Exchange either by entertaining the visiting students or by contributing to the Fellowship fund, will read with gratification the announcement that two new Fellowships have been pledged in the exchange with Sweden. Aside from the Fellowships given directly from the funds of the Foundation, our exchange of students with the three Scandinavian countries has been supported during the past five years by annual donations pledged by individuals and firms on both sides of the Atlantic. The Sweden-U. S. A. Exchange completed its first five-year course with the academic year 1923-1924 so that for the present school year it has been necessary to renew previous pledges and to attract to the exchange new donors. This work has been advancing during the past six months and it was partly to assist the officers of the Swedish Foundation, Sverige-Amerika Stiftelsen that Professor Lawrence of our Board of Trustees and the Secretary of the Foundation spent their summer holiday in the North. The exchanges with Denmark and Norway do not require renewal until next spring so that their visit to these countries had less immediate significance.

The two new Fellowships are to be given by a group of business men in

Göteborg and by the American Minister to Sweden, Robert Woods Bliss, and Mrs. Bliss. It was after a dinner in the restaurant of Trädgårdsföreningen that the new Göteborg Fellowship was pledged, a thousand dollars each year for three years. Mr. B. G. Prytz, of the S. K. F. Company, already a Fellowship donor, was host and his guests with Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Creese, were Mr. Herman Mannheimer, Mr. John Hammar, Mr. Gustaf Ekman, Mr. Torgny Segerstedt, Mr. Olle Hjorth, Professor Romdahl, and Consul Shoales. The apportionment of the Fellowship was so quietly arranged that the American visitors were not conscious of the fact that a Fellowship was in the making until they were invited to send a telegram announcing it to the President of Sverige-Amerika Stiftelsen, Professor Arrhenius. So Göteborg, the home port of *Kalmar Nyckel*, again sends its young representatives to America.

The donation of Minister and Mrs. Bliss is the more welcome because it is a spontaneous expression of confidence in the student work as part of the program of good-will between Sweden and America. Like the Göteborg Fellowship, the stipend established by the American Minister and his wife is for a period of three years. It is significant that both the previous Minister, Ira Nelson Mor-

ris, and the present Minister are among the donors to the Fellowship Exchange.

#### In Norway

Professor Lawrence and Mr. Creese began their month in the Scandinavian countries at Bergen on July 17. They found our friends in Norway somewhat more inclined to discuss the political crisis of the day than to review Norway's student interchange with America in which no crisis will arise until next year. Ludwig Mowinkel, donor of one of our Fellowships, was forming Norway's new government. Some of our friends had to be found in the recess rooms of the Storting but others, including Dr. Gade, Mr. Hambro, and Director Henriksen, of the Norwegian-American Line, met at luncheon with Minister Swenson in the new home of the American legation. Closing a week of many conferences in Christiania, the American visitors retired to Lillehammer, the quiet hillside of Maihaugen and undisturbed Lake Mjösen.

#### In Denmark

After a busy week in Stockholm, a three-day holiday at Visby, and a profitable pause in Göteborg, Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Creese went on to Copenhagen. Troops of Boy Scouts assembled for the World Jamboree marched under the flags of many nations through the streets of the city; the Americans were pitching their tents when the two visitors from the Foundation came with Professor Jespersen to the great encampment on Sunday afternoon. So great a part of Copenhagen had come out to the Scout encampment that it seemed almost futile to return to the proper work of the Foundation in the city. Here Kammerherre Clan and Mr. Berg of the Board of Danmarks Amerikanske Selskab were waiting to discuss affairs of the Foundation and the Society. As in Norway the Fellowship Exchange must be renewed at the end of another winter.

## Northern Lights

### Danish Explorer Here

Lauge Koch, the Danish Arctic explorer and scientist, is in the United States to lecture before geographical societies on his explorations in Greenland. He has also another very interesting mission, namely, to present to our government the records left by Peary in cairns along the north coast of Greenland, records which Lauge Koch, according to the accepted custom, took with him, leaving copies in their place. Peary's enemies have questioned whether he ever really visited these regions, and the doubts cast on his own account of his trip have been strengthened by the fact that subsequent explorers have been unable to find "Peary's Channel." Lauge Koch has verified Peary's description of a body of water in those tracts, although according to him it is a lake, not a channel, and, of course, the records he brings with him vindicate the truth of Peary's account beyond a doubt.

The young Danish explorer has performed one great feat of sportsmanship in making the longest sled trip in the history of Arctic exploration, a trip lasting two hundred days. As his chief contribution to science is counted his charting of northern Greenland and his establishing the existence of what is known as the Caledonian folding, which connects the European and American continents.

### To Lecture at Columbia

Professor Anathon Aall, who holds a chair in philosophy at the University of Kristiania, has been engaged as visiting professor at Columbia University for the academic year 1924-25. He is to deliver two series of lectures, one on "Hellenism and Christianity," the other on "Friedrich Nietzsche, His Life, Work, and Personality." Professor Aall's books, some of which have appeared in English and German, span over a wide range of subjects, literary, philosophical, and religious.



### "Harmonien" in Denmark

The members of the Chicago Danish singing society "Harmonien" should come back with hearts warmed by the welcome they received on their summer tour to Denmark. The generous impulse that led them to give the entire proceeds of their concerts to local charities in the Danish towns where they appeared, while each singer financed his own trip, gave proof of their unselfish love for the homeland and was greatly appreciated in Denmark.

### Norden's Summer Course

The inter-Scandinavian society Norden held its summer course this year at the beautiful Hindsgavl castle in Denmark. There was a full attendance. Of the 85 students present, 44 came from Sweden, 21 from Denmark, 18 from Norway, and 2 from Iceland. Lectures were given on

Danish history, literature, art, geology, agriculture, and industry, supplemented by trips to various points of interest. A two days' journey to the returned portion of Slesvig was the feature on the program that made the deepest impression upon the visiting students. The course lasted two weeks.

### Norwegian Theatre Jubilee

The Norwegian National Theatre, whose work was described in the REVIEW by Anders Orbeck, recently celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in the first week of September. Three special jubilee celebrations were given, presenting *The Political Tinker* by Holberg, *An Enemy of the People* by Ibsen, and *Paul Lange and Tora Parsberg* by Björnson. It seemed particularly fitting that Björn Björnson, who more than any one else is to be credited with the founding of the theatre, should now be returned again to his old position at its head. The chief honors of the occasion were divided between him and the most brilliant star on the Norwegian stage, Fru Johanne Dybwad, who was made Knight of the First Class of the Order of St. Olaf.



MAYOR HYLAN WELCOMING THE VASA CHILDREN

### The "Vasa" Children Returned

The "Vasa" Children, who have returned from a tour to Sweden under the auspices of Dr. and Mrs. Johannes Hoving, are probably the most youthful deputation that ever went from America to the home of their Scandinavian forebears. The children gave a number of concerts and became very popular in Sweden.



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